UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/S-17/PV.7
9 March 1990

ENGLISH

Seventeenth special session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 23 February 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)

later: Mr. HURST (Antigua and Barbuda)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [8] (continued)
- Credentials of representatives to the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly [3] (continued)

  (b) Report of the Credentials Committee
- General debate [8] (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ENGO (Cameroon): Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Cameroon, and on my own behalf, I would like to extend to you once again our warm and fraternal congratulations on assuming the presidency of the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly. We recall your efficient handling of the business of the forty-fourth session and of the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly dedicated to consideration of the negative consequences of the inhuman system of apartheid. We have no doubt that our current deliberations will also be successful.

We also wish on this occasion to commend the Secretary-General very highly for his unswerving commitment to global peace and security, particularly in the field of international drug control. The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was a follow-up of his personal initiative. The two important documents adopted by the Conference - the Declaration and the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline - are now not only a landmark in the treatment of offenders in drug abuse as well as in the illicit trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs but also provide a solid framework on which the special session must progressively develop desirable norms of conduct.

We meet here today at a critical crossroads, harassed by unprecedented events, conditioned by the overbearing consequences of technological advance, challenged by opportunities for progress that unfold as we approach a new millenium.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

The scope of the task ahead will undoubtedly be influenced by what we already know. There are crucial elements in the endeavour to establish an atmosphere conducive to global peace, security and sustaining development. In the pursuit of our noble vision, we must use the experience of the past to mould today's strategies for progress in the future. The current mood of change must be exploited to reject the misgivings of that past and to institute mechanisms for addressing the complex challenges posed to our generation.

Racism, imperialism and narrow nationalism have joined many other "ism's" to frustrate the attainment of ideals universally held. In designing efficacious responses to needs for better standards of life and the eradication of the causes of conflict, ignorance, poverty, disease and crippling economic and social conditions, the war on drugs must remain central to our co-operation in those, as well as in other, fields. The cancer of drug abuse and addiction has not only threatened the quality of human life; it has reduced the capacity of the youth of today to engage in the type of education and activity that best prepares them for a leadership role in the future.

The United Nations has been one of the critical centres for exploring global strategies to counter the efforts of criminal syndicates and cartels. Specialized agencies of the United Nations - the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Children's Fund and others - are all involved in the implementation of various resolutions and decisions reached by the International Narcotics Control Board, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Division on Narcotic Drugs and resolutions of the General Assembly itself. They constitute an attempt to address various aspects of the problem, including the reduction of improper supply and consumption, prevention and treatment of addiction and rehabilitation.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

The question the special session of the General Assembly must address is twofold. First, we must analyse the extent to which the United Nations system is well adapted to play a greater co-ordinating role in meeting grave challenges in the domains of drug-abuse control. Secondly, we must determine the guidelines for implementing new arrangements, pursued at the international level, to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization in combating drug-related problems in the future.

It is important to examine the adaptability of the United Nations system with the object of its greater role in enhancing international co-operation in the war on drugs. It is our view that a further plethora of international instruments on the same issue may only detract from full implementation and thereby compound the problem.

Our strategy at this stage must be geared towards full implementation at the national and international levels of the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of activities to prevent and reduce the demand for illegal drugs. Determined effort must therefore be made to promote the early ratification of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It is our view that that Convention provides the basic framework on which States can build their bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the war against drug abuse and its negative consequences.

In that context General Assembly resolution 44/142 requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on the economic and social consequences of the illicit traffic in drugs. The purpose would be to enlighten the international community as to the scope of the common interests shared by all societies in resolving the adverse effects of the predicament that plagues the march towards better standards of progress for the future.

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(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

All nations do not necessarily share the same category of problems. Their broad underlying causes tend to be different. At the most difficult extreme, the cultivation of illicit coca has provided labour and financial resources to some. The issue of legality and morality is relegated to the background as long as that undesirable role remains.

For other nations the issue has traversed the plain of production. Consumption has led to the diversion of desperately needed capital for development to wasteful health-destructive ends. The long-term malaise of frustration, alienation, helplessness and discouragement for the citizenry, who are indispensable for nation-building and economic development, proves to be devastating.

It is important to note that all cuts in subsidy in education, in no matter what country, whether small or large, expose children to the inevitability of illiteracy, unemployment and involvement in drugs, either as consumers or simply as gratified carriers or middlemen.

Resources employed to combat an established illegal or prohibited activity may have value, yet it must be understood that prevention could do more than make such waste of resources unnecessary. It could enhance constructive deployment for fruitful construction.

Success for the international community in combating the drug problem can only come from a change in the approach to issues of supply and demand for illicit drugs to ensure that national and global preparedness reaches down into the values of each society. The encouragement of systematic education would turn citizens from indulgence to more health-sustaining pursuits. The international plan of action or a decade on drug-related problems must be supported in a comprehensive programme covering all fronts, from incentives to the practice of cultivation, supply and the

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

training of and support for law-enforcement officers. It must be accompanied by an equally imperative co-operation in the organization of appropriate machinery for surveillance and detection and border and entry points of national territories.

We are further persuaded that, although international co-operation is a desirable and necessary component in the struggle against drugs, it can never replace action at the national and regional levels, where the issues fundamentally remain the primary responsiblity of States. In that light, we would like to state that Cameroon's geographical location falls within a zone in Africa that is increasingly being used as a transit area for drug trafficking. We are therefore not spared from that problem, although it has not yet attained alarming proportions. The Government of the Republic has undertaken a series of preventive measures, motivated by its conviction that in fighting against existing drug abuse it is perhaps more urgent now to remove the element of curiosity from the public. That element leads individuals to succumb to self-destructive activities under the influence of sheer ignorance.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

We have therefore reinforced control at our borders, including points of entry to our national territory, by the creation of an anti-drugs unit. Our nation envisages continuous mobilization of the populace against the dangers of drug abuse. The organization of seminars is an effective weapon that we have employed. It is in this light that a national conference on drug-related problems is scheduled for April 1990 in Yaounde, the national capital. It is the intention to continue to participate actively in several regional and multilateral organizations to which we have adhered, as part of a policy to prevent crime and combat the drug problem.

Intensification of efforts at the national and regional levels, however, requires commensurate strengthening of the United Nations drug-control organs and their secretariats. Against this background, the functioning of the Commission, its subsidiary bodies, the International Narcotics Control Board and the Division on Narcotic Drugs, may need to be reviewed and reassessed, in accordance with the mandate of General Assembly resolution 44/141. This is an endeavour to which my delegation looks forward.

With regard to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and the outcry for increased financial resources to meet drug-related obligations, we feel compelled to declare that there is need for maximum utilization of the resources currently allocated for drug-control activities, as well as for the provision of additional funds, out of extrabudgetary resources, to the United Nations drug units to enable those units to implement their mandates fully. Our emphasis, therefore, is on the mobilization of resources for increased programmes outside the regular budget of the United Nations, which currently is spread too thinly as the result of attempts to meet many diverse priorities.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

With regard to the setting of priorities, we believe that the General Assembly should consider designating drug-control activities as priority items. This must, however, be in the context of deliberations on all aspects of priority-setting in the draft medium-term plan for 1992-97, in accordance with existing rules and regulations governing programme planning and budgeting in the United Nations. In this regard, the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination as well as the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) should play their usual, indispensable role.

We started by emphasizing that our collective success in eradicating the social and economic problems that afflict mankind as we approach the year 2000 will depend on the resolve with which we address all the obstacles to resolution of attendant problems. We adhere to the basic tenet that unless all the basic problems facing mankind are addressed with even-handed urgency, the resolution of one problem will lead only to escalation of other problems.

The quest for peace, security and development has many facets. Our contribution to the universal effort to restore health, vitality and dignity to the human condition cannot be too selective, for these things all have their respective parts to play in meeting the grave challenges of our times. We are convinced that the multilateral process provides the only effective machinery for the eradication of problems that have assumed a transnational dimension, and we look forward to contributing to the continued strengthening of the United Nations in its co-ordinating role.

Mr. ERNER (Turkey): My Government shares with representatives who have spoken already the view that the issue of illicit drugs poses a grave threat to all countries. This special session of the General Assembly is therefore a welcome opportunity to consider our collective response and to agree on appropriate

(Mr. Erner, Turkey)

collective counter-action. The high-level participation is significant in demonstrating the political dimension of the problem of drugs. It is even more significant in that it signals to the merchants of death that Governments like those of Colombia are not alone in their brave stand.

The special session represents a natural and major step by the international community in gearing up to the challenge. In the course of the last few years, the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT) represented one of the major global responses to the threat of drugs. Almost concurrently, intensive work commenced on a treaty. This culminated in the adoption, and opening for signature, of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The Convention and the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline (CMO) underlined, in different ways, the fundamental need for counter-action on all fronts. The CMO did this through the use of the word "comprehensive" in its title and by the balance that it established between its four major areas of concern - supply, demand, illicit trafficking, and treatment and rehabilitation. The adoption of the Convention, on the other hand, has served to underline the basic fact that the 1961 and 1971 Conventions - both regulating mainly the supply of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances - have amply demonstrated, through their implementation, the fundamental need also to attack illicit trafficking in a co-ordinated way.

I congratulate the officers of the Preparatory Committee and of the Ad Hoc Committee on their excellent work, which resulted in the merging of the views expressed by interested delegations. Turkey is both a traditional producer country and a transit country for illicit trafficking. That is why we are so deeply involved in the fight against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and why we spend considerable sums from our national budget on this fight.

(Mr. Erner, Turkey)

As a result of strict measures taken by my Government, there is no diversion of drugs licitly produced in Turkey. My Government's firm action has earned the praise of various international organizations. However, as it is on the so-called Balkan route, Turkey faces an increasing challenge. In 1989 the quantity of narcotic drugs confiscated showed an increase of 11 per cent by comparison with the figure for the previous year. Indeed, thanks to the activities of Turkish law-enforcement agencies, a considerable quantity of illicit narcotic drugs was confiscated - both in Turkey and in other Western European countries. In this respect, a number of bilateral co-operation agreements have been concluded, and drug-liaison officers have been exchanged between Turkey and several other countries. Turkey also hosted, in Ankara last October, the meeting of the Sub-Commission against Illicit Trafficking in the Near and Middle East.

(Mr. Erner, Turkey)

With regard to the establishment of a regional data exchange centre in the region of the Sub-Commission on Illicit Trafficking in the Near and Middle East, my Government holds the view that such a centre can be established only with the full agreement of all member States of the Sub-Commission.

Turkey was one of the first countries to bring to the attention of the international community the link between the illicit trafficking of narcotics and arms smuggling and international terrorism. We are gratified that these links have been recognized by the States participating in the special session of the General Assembly.

As underlined in the recent meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, we believe that a successful outcome to the special session of the General Assembly requires a balanced approach to all aspects of the question. We consider the recent emphasis on the reduction of illicit demand a positive development, but this should not result in our losing sight of the supply and trafficking aspects of the problem. A balanced approach is needed between the control of supply, including crop substitution, and illicit trafficking, combined with the creation of more effective law enforcement forces. The same principle of balanced approach applies to the regions; we should not focus on one region at the expense of another. This might have a "balloon effect", causing the traffickers to develop new markets, methods and drugs. Equal consideration must be given to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

My delegation is of the opinion that the export of chemicals used in the illict production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances should be strictly controlled. We therefore welcome the paragraph relating to this issue in the draft programme of action.

(Mr. Erner, Turkey)

Turkey has always attached great importance to the most valuable and effective activities conducted by the three drug control units of the United Nations, namely, the United Nations Division on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC). These units have played an active role in combating drug abuse over the last decades and certainly need greater resources than what they are getting now.

Additional resources from the United Nations budget to the United Nations Division on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board must be provided and a substantial increase in the voluntary contributions to UNFDAC must be sought. I should add that there must also be a balanced approach in the allocation of funds to UNFDAC. Since a larger part of the funds is earmarked for specific purposes, UNFDAC has difficulties in establishing its priorities and planning its activities.

The special session gives us once again the opportunity to capitalize on the political will and the determination expressed by Member States to deal with this deadly threat to mankind. As a result of the work of the special session of the General Assembly, all States will intensify their international co-operation to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking at the national, regional and global levels. For its part, my Government is fully committed to continuing its co-operation with all Governments to eradicate this scourge of our time.

Mr. GODFREY (Belize): The delegation of Belize is pleased to add its voice to the chorus of congratulations which you, Sir, have already received on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this seventeenth special session devoted to all aspects of the question of international co-operation against the illegal production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of drugs.

(Mr. Godfrey, Belize)

Because this problem is all-pervasive, it transcends borders and nationalities. It eats away the structures of societies and threatens the health and well-being of millions of people. It is therefore a fitting and morally legitimate subject for international concern and deliberation at the highest levels of the global family.

Over the years the threat has escalated from the level of atavistic curiosity to global concern. The magnitude of the problem has now become a major national security threat to many of our more vulnerable States which are caught between the cross-fire of the producers, the traffickers and the consumers. More and more, it has become urgent for countries to pool their resources and military and intelligence capabilities against the well-organized, well-financed and better equipped drug cartels.

The victims of this modern pestilence range from the socially advantaged to the disadvantaged, in developed and developing countries, through all age groups, but the most vulnerable are the young people of the world. The health of generations today and tomorrow is at stake.

It is in this context that the delegation of Belize approaches the special session on drug related problems. National efforts at eradication, interdiction and treatment need to be complemented by regional and international policies and actions.

At home in Belize my Government has launched a concerted drive to rid the country of this scourge. We are using the police, courts, schools and all the social organs at our command to get the message across. In areas where the legal machinery falls short we have embarked on the strengthening of legislation to stiffen penalties for drug traffickers.

(Mr. Godfrey, Belize)

At the same time we have taken steps to establish a National Drug Abuse Control Council to formulate new and effective anti-drug policies for co-ordinating and monitoring drug abuse prevention activities. It has already been determined that the Belizean population is very much aware that a drug-abuse problem exists in the country and that the magnitude of this problem is second only to unemployment among the most important problems facing the country. National strategy therefore also focuses on treatment and rehabilitation, including training, support for self-help groups and an outreach patient programme.

In an effort to join forces in regional and bilateral action in the war against drugs, Belize has concluded arrangements and agreements with the United States of America and Mexico committing us to undertake joint efforts and execute specific programmes to combat illicit production and traffic, reduce demand, prevent illicit use, and co-operate in attacking the profits from illicit drugs.

Under these arrangements Belize employs human and financial resources in specific programmes against drugs, as well as having embarked on an information exchange exercise to strengthen mutual capabilities in the fight against drugs.

In the case of Mexico, with whom Belize shares a common border, a wide-ranging agreement was concluded earlier this month to protect the life and health of our respective peoples from the harmful effects of narcotic drugs. A mechanism adopted to put this programme into effect is the setting up of a Belize-Mexico Commission to co-operate towards controlling illegal drugs. The Commission shall have consultative and operational functions and be the vehicle for co-ordination of anti-drug activities between the two States. The bilateral agreement will promote co-operation between Belize and Mexico to control more efficiently drug trafficking and drug consumption. It calls for the initiation in both countries of programmes for drug treatment and greater public awareness to eradicate drug cultivation and, where applicable, establish substitute economic activity.

(Mr. Godfrey, Belize)

The agreement also aims to identify and destroy facilities where drug substances and narcotics are illegally produced, establish systems of exchange of information and develop new legal instruments to achieve these ends.

All our national and bilateral actions have been inspired by regional and international drug control mandates, in particular the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control, adopted at Vienna in 1987. Belize has provisionally applied and adhered to the principles of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, concluded in December 1988. After careful review, and in light of the urgent priority now being given by the international community to this subject, my Administration has deemed it appropriate to accelerate the process towards early signature and full ratification of this essential multilateral treaty.

(Mr. Godfrey, Belize)

It is clear to us in Belize - and, indeed, many speakers before me have made the point - that most of our countries can no longer deal with the problem alone. With the best will in the world, and recognizing the imperative of deploying personnel and resources to this fight, our resources are limited.

My delegation fully supports earlier requests made for the allocation of adequate resources for the effective implementation of the system-wide global programme of action in pursuit of this session's goal of strengthening and enhancing existing levels of international co-operation. For countries on the edge of development, all areas of national attention take on urgency in their need for financial and resource allocation. The unemployed need urgent job creation and the sick require hospitals, the homeless shelter, and the hungry food. Those are the social and political realities that plague our Governments and on which the drug lords prey. They take advantage of our inability to deploy comparable resources to those they have available.

In waging war against the drug barons, there is a need for the establishment of machinery to transfer information and technology from the industrialized countries to the developing nations. There is an urgent need for the special concerted and collective action this seventeenth special session envisages.

We need to subscribe to a political declaration and a global programme of action that respond to a coalition of concerns. We are aware that differences exist in the modalities of intervention, but we sense a common purpose in this Assembly. It is that common purpose that will guide us in deploying the resources needed for the final attack against the problem. The strategies to be employed must be effective. The stakes are too high. Above all, these strategies must recognize the sovereignty of States Members of the Organization and reject unilateral intervention, respect the constitutional procedures instituted in national territories and work with municipal law.

(Mr. Godfrey, Belize)

Universal legal and operational procedures to be adopted in that offensive need not be burdensome on the least developed countries if they are operated within the framework of mutual collaboration and are aimed at being supportive and self-sustaining.

An area of particular concern for countries that are seen as primary producers of illicit crops is the setting-up of mechanisms to promote and market legal crops substituted for illegal cultivation. The impact on the informal economy of the eradication of illegal crops needs to be tempered with fair markets and fair prices for legal cultivation. We cannot minimize the attraction to small farmers in rural areas who are faced with the ready market and exorbitant rewards for the production of marijuana, poppy and coca where the markets do not respond adequately to the sugar, banana and maize crops they are asked to produce legally.

We cannot ignore the allure of instant financial liquidity to the young drug pusher who would otherwise face unemployment and hunger in the absence of real employment. At the same time that we pledge to rid the earth of the scourge of drug production, we have an obligation to provide profitable and dignified existences to those who are displaced.

Perhaps just as importantly, it is time that we all change our thinking. It is not "them" and "us" anymore. Drugs are affecting every one of us here today, tearing apart the fabric of our families, ripping asunder our societies and making a mockery of civilization itself.

None of us is immune, no matter how much we might like to imagine that the problem cannot touch our individual lives. It has done so already. In one way or another, it touches every single one of us, every single day of our lives. It touches us in the cost of law enforcement and in the cost of labour lost to inefficiency and ineptitude.

(Mr. Godfrey, Belize)

Worse, much worse, it touches us in the danger on our roads, in the violence in our streets, and all too often in the violation of our children's right to live normal, productive lives. I wish to stress that education is a major part of the answer, education away from the romanticization of drugs and towards calling them what they really are: scourges, true scourges, of civilization. Our young must be taught to scorn drugs and drug pushers; only then can we begin to confront the problem.

Indeed, novel and imaginative approaches are essential to a global strategy. Those approaches should punish severely those who profit from the menace of drugs. Their ill-gotten gains should be employed against narco-traffickers. Substantial international resources will need to be deployed to strengthen existing national and regional structures instituted to combat drug production, trafficking and abuse. Effective short- and long-term programmes need to be devised to complement those already in place. In this effort Belize pledges its co-operation, its limited resources, and its indomitable will.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): At the outset, we associate ourselves with the congratulatory remarks addressed to you, Sir, by previous speakers on your unanimous election to preside over the General Assembly at this vitally important seventeenth special session. We also join in applauding the constructive initiatives taken by our Secretary-General and the staff of the Secretariat in this regard.

While some are already attaching great historic significance to this special session, we believe that its true historic significance lies not in the fact that we have gathered to address the issue of drug trafficking but instead in the hope that our deliberations will conclude with a commitment to substantive action rather than merely with words. Thus we shall not be able to gauge the true success of

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this session by evaluating the various speeches we hear; nor shall we be able to gauge the true success of this session by examining any documents or declarations we might produce. Instead, we believe there will be two true measures of the success of this special session.

On the one hand, our success will be measured by the degree of our active, effective and sustained commitment to joint international action against those who United States Secretary of State James A. Baker III so accurately characterized as "criminals of uncommon power and uncommon brutality". The other true measure of the success of this special session will be the degree to which we, the nations of the world, succeed in arming ourselves with the requisite moral ammunition to dissuade the youth of the world from following the path of greed, corruption, escapism and self-aggrandizement.

There are certain occasions on which brevity is most appropriate. This is one such occasion. There is no need for endless debate here at the United Nations on this subject. All of us are by now painfully aware - or at least should be aware - of what drug abuse and drug trafficking have done to contemporary civilization and threaten to do to future generations.

There is no need to recite statistics on the production, distribution and consumption of illicit and addictive drugs. In fact, a mere recitation of statistics can, in some instances, be misleading. Recalling the number of tons of crops destroyed, drugs seized, persons arrested or convictions obtained is not an indication that we are winning the war against drug abuse and drug traffickers. Instead, those numbers are indications of how extensive is the use of drugs, the spread of the drug culture and the magnitude of what confronts us.

Vanuatu is a small South Pacific country which is not, at this time, known to be a direct link in the chain of the nefarious international traffic in illicit

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narcotic drugs. However, Vanuatu's concern is as great as if it were an immediate and direct link in that chain. Vanuatu and other small South Pacific island States have concerns that are similar to those of the Caribbean States.

We are aware that in mankind's relatively brief history as a form of life, we have faced a series of unique and often frightening challenges. On more than a few occasions, these challenges have not only threatened mankind's well-being but also its evolution and its very survival. A number of these challenges have been of a scientific, ecological or medical nature and have not therefore resulted exclusively from mankind's own inadequacies or failings. However, other such challenges have been of a political, social or moral nature, therefore making them mankind's own doing by mankind's own folly.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Despite the obvious fact that there is no need to do so, we seem to have perfected a rather remarkable ability to create and erect our own barriers in the path of human development. Thus, not too long ago, chattel slavery and the cruel and brutal commercial traffic in men, women and children challenged mankind's very humanity. What was true of slavery was, and is, equally true of colonialism in its various guises.

In the twentieth century the development and deployment of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons elevated the means of death and destruction to unprecedented levels and challenged mankind's ability to survive. Racism, religious intolerance and ethnic bigotry continue to plague every corner of the globe and challenge every one of us to learn to accept and abide by the fundamental truths that all life is sacred and that all human beings - and all cultures - merit respect as equals.

It is ironic, therefore, that as we approach the end of this century, and just as we appear to be on the verge of resolving a few of the most recent threats to mankind's survival, we are confronted by a new challenge to civilization. This new challenge is composed of the dual threat posed by those who are obsessed by drugs and those who are obsessed by the obscene and immoral profits gained from the traffic in these instruments of the misery and degradation of other human beings.

Drug abuse and drug trafficking threaten every one of us, regardless of our size, regardless of our wealth, regardless of our power, regardless of our professed beliefs. These evils know and respect no international or moral boundaries. These evils respect no laws of mankind, no laws of nature, no laws of God. In their wake, these evils leave only a wide path of seduction, corruption, fear, intimidation, destruction and death.

Much, much more must be done, and must be done immediately by each and every member of the world community to combat these twin evils. There can be no

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spectators. The outcome of this battle will affect us all. Therefore, the battle must be waged by us all and not just by a few of us.

In recent months the courage and determination of the Government and the people of Colombia have been applauded by every member of the international community. Colombia and the other Andean nations have for a number of years been standing in the front line of the struggle against drug traffickers and the social terrorism they practise. Last week's summit meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, offers some hope for a comprehensive assault on the underlying causes of the drug trade.

However, we must all understand that there are no easy answers and there will be no quick solutions. Drug abuse and drug trafficking are not problems that can be resolved merely by making more financial resources available. Money alone usually creates more problems than it solves.

Similarly, catchy slogans by themselves are also inadequate. Such slogans are not only inadequate, they are also misleading. They tend to deceive too many of us into believing that drug abuse and drug trafficking are minor irritations that can be combated with relative ease, without addressing and examining fundamental values and priorities.

Obsessive fixations on short-term pleasure, instant gratification and a perceived need or desire to escape from life's realities are major contributing factors to addictions of any sort. Drug addiction is no exception. Selfishness, greed, or an obsessive preoccupation with material wealth contribute to many major social ills. Drug traffickers are merely extreme manifestations of the obsessive desire to acquire wealth and power at any cost. Earlier generations of slave traders were possessed of the same obsessive and immoral desires as are the traffickers in these new instruments of slavery. Until we are willing to face these realities, serious questions will always be raised concerning our

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understanding of, and ability to reverse, the deterioration of civilized society as evidenced by the illicit drug trade and its associated violence.

We have never been particularly impressed with the argument which is often heard that the drug problem is primarily a problem of demand. Nor are we persuaded by the equally myopic argument that the drug problem can be solved by cutting off or even reducing the supply.

Those who look exclusively to the wealthier consuming nations as the source of the problem, fail to understand the comprehensive nature of the drug trade in this increasingly inter-connected world of ours. Similarly, those who look primarily to the producing countries for solutions also fail to understand the comprehensive nature of drug abuse and drug trafficking.

Today, not a single nation in the world can accurately be characterized as a producer and not a consumer of addictive drugs. Not a single nation in the world can be characterized as only a conduit for, and not a consumer of, addictive drugs. Not a single nation in the world can accurately state that only the public officials and the youth of other nations have been compromised and corrupted by the immoral profits of drug traffickers. Today, not a single nation in the world can claim that the social fabric of its neighbours has been affected by the drug trade but that its own social fabric and its own moral values remain intact and unaffected.

One can walk a short distance from this building, the Headquarters of the United Nations, and witness the extensive nature of the drug abuse and drug trafficking which confront the world. Within a few short minutes' drive of this building, we could enter communities that are themselves microcosms of the world's developing nations. These communities - although situated in the world's richest and most powerful nation - are among the most severely affected by the illicit

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traffic in addictive drugs. The people of these communities - young and old, male and female - are the victims who too often become nameless and faceless abstractions when far too much emphasis is placed on statistics rather than on real live human beings.

No set of statistics can ever adequately describe the agony and despair that drugs have brought into so many lives. No statistical surveys can ever describe the frustrations, the shattered dreams, the nightmare of drug addiction. If this is the fate of so many people within large developed countries, what then is to be the fate of those within developing countries?

In a sense - but only in an unfortunate sense - the drug trade is a great equalizer. No nation on earth has a monopoly on the misery, corruption, destruction and death caused by those who traffic in illicit drugs. Similarly, no nation on earth has a monopoly on virtue and can claim to be free of the consequences of this evil traffic. We must address this problem together or we will be consumed by it individually, one by one, community by community and, finally, nation by nation.

Together, we can reinforce the positive values which are mankind's greatest weapons against drug addiction and other social addictions. Together, we can provide substantially better economic and social opportunities for those who are seduced by the opportunities in the drug trade that currently do not always exist, for everyone, in legitimate endeavours. Together, we can isolate, and eventually defeat, those whose material desires are many times greater than is their adherence to any moral restraints. Together, we can save the civilization mankind has been fortunate enough to craft, and we can bequeath to future generations a world in which drug abuse and drug trafficking are no longer major threats. Thus we will have overcome yet another obstacle in the long journey of human development.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Then, and only then, will we finally be able to assign a true historic significance to this seventeenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly. History awaits the hand of our collective authorship.

Mr. STRESOV (Bulgaria): I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Bureau, on your elections to your responsible posts, and to wish you success in the discharge of your duties.

The holding of the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly is a logical result of the strong politicization and internationalization in recent years of the issues related to narcotic drugs. Over the past years the global drug problem has been exacerbated significantly, a trend that has also been strengthened by all-time highs in the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the increase in supply and demand, and the involvement of heavily armed organizations, which are ready to use violence and which even threaten the social structure of States in certain parts of the world. An element on which attention has been focused only recently is the ecological aspect of the drugs issue.

Only a few decades ago it was generally believed that there was no reason to consider the growing drug abuse as a global threat. However, we must now admit that drug abuse and illicit traffic in narcotic drugs have spread in many countries. We believe that, irrespective of the common roots of drug abuse in different parts of the world, we should assess the problem differently for each country and social group by taking a number of historic factors into consideration.

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

We are of the opinion that great attention should be paid to measures for the prevention and reduction of the demand for drugs. It appears to us that the problems of demand have only recently gained the prominence they deserve. Producers in developing countries whose livelihood often depends entirely on the growing of drug crops should be offered better alternatives.

Problems of the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts should be properly addressed. In Bulgaria, narcotics are not so much an internal problem, as drug abuse in the country is very limited; our problems in this area are those of a transit State. Bulgaria is situated on the main route for the transporting of narcotics drugs from the Middle East and South Asia to Western Europe and North America.

The Bulgarian delegation is convinced that to combat a problem having such severe and often tragic consequences it will be necessary to elaborate an adequate and co-ordinated policy of international co-operation reflecting the determination of nations and Governments, all the more so because our experience has shown that even big States with considerable material and financial resources are unable to resolve their problems in this field, or even to reduce their dangerouse acuteness, as long as they act alone and in isolation.

Under the circumstances, efficient counteraction is possible only through the adoption of joint and concerted efforts and measures by all States, the United Nations, the specialized agencies and each and every member of society.

Bulgaria has joined in the efforts of the international community aimed at combating illegal drug trafficking and abuse, which is reflected in its signing the existing international instruments: the Conventions on narcotic drugs of 1961, and that on psychotropic subtances of 1971. Last May, we acceded to the Convention against the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. I feel free to say that Bulgaria has fulfilled its international commitments, as

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

its legislation fully complies with those Conventions. All premeditated offences related to the production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs, as well as all acts directed at encouraging or abetting the taking of narcotics, are punishable under the law.

At the regional level, Bulgaria is represented at a number of conferences and meetings on illicit drug trafficking and abuse. I should mention here the meeting of experts of the Balkan countries on co-operation in combating terrorism, illegal drugs and arms trafficking, held in Belgrade on 7 and 8 June 1989.

My country is well aware of the great significance of bilateral co-operation in the fight against drugs. More recently we established initial contacts with States in order to reach corresponding agreements. We attach particular importance to the signing of agreements on mutual legal assistance reflecting the principles of the 1988 Convention.

It is evident that the international community recognizes the fact that all States are susceptible to the negative effects of drug trafficking and drug abuse. This awareness determines the growing interest of the competent authorities of a number of countries in the development of co-operation to prevent illegal drug trafficking and addiction. The entire international system for combating drug trafficking, as well as the system for international control, is operating in the context of our global realities. We believe that the potential of the United Nations in respect of this problem has by no means been exhausted. Its specialized agencies and other organizations involved in combating narcotic drugs are taking measures to better utilize this potential. Last year, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination received a mandate to elaborate a programme of action in the sphere of drug control for the specialized agencies of the United Nations. It is our hope that this will help focus efforts on eliminating duplication and improving the effectiveness of their work and, what is

(Mr. Stresov, Bulgaria)

more important, that it will help utilize the available resources much more efficiently.

We are ready to support this effort. At the same time I would like to express our hope that at the current special session the General Assembly will examine the issue of drugs in all its complexity with determination and in a consistent and balanced manner. We look forward to the political declaration and the Programme of Action becoming effective instruments in the search for solutions to all aspects of the problem. My delegation supports the idea of proclaiming a United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse, as suggested in General Assembly resolution 44/141.

International understanding and co-operation are becoming increasingly vital for the finding of solutions to these problems. It is our hope that their discussion at this session will help strengthen the bodies of the United Nations operating in the field of narcotic drugs and will reaffirm, at the highest political level, the need for international co-operation in this area.

The delegation of Bulgaria is prepared to support every decision and to participate in every effort to the benefit of all nations in the name of our final goal: a world free of narcotic drugs.

Mr. PEERTHUM (Mauritius): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this special session of the General Assembly on drug trafficking. I am confident that, given your guidance and experience, our deliberations will produce concrete directives and measures to help Member States mobilize and co-operate in a global struggle against drug trafficking.

My appreciation goes to the Secretary-General for his unfailing support in favour of an international campaign against drug trafficking.

The necessity of world-wide action against drug trafficking has for years been a major concern of the United Nations. Its pioneering effort in formulating an international drug abuse control strategy and a five-year Programme of Action,

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

particularly through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its executive arm the Division of Narcotic Drugs, has had considerable impact. It alerted the international community at a time when drug abuse and illicit trafficking were spreading their tentacles world-wide in alarming proportations, and it resulted in the creation of two major international documents, the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline and the United Nations Convention of 1988. The Convention has now been signed by 89 countries, including my own country, Mauritius, and should come into force soon if Member States make it a point to speed up the usual ratification procedures.

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

Those two documents are landmarks in the history of the fight against drug trafficking. They provide the international community with an indispensable legal instrument and political framework to combat an enemy whose global organization and sophisticated network are now able to threaten the security and integrity of nations and cause regional economic destabilization. The two documents are the fruits of long negotiations carried out in a spirit of co-operation and consensus and approved by a majority of States. Our aim today is to build on those sound foundations and open new fronts in the war against the evil of drug trafficking. Even if our understanding of the drug trade and its economic implications makes them appear today more frightening than ever before, we must remain committed to our goals and give ourselves the means to achieve them through a clear plan of action.

Many speakers before me have referred to the Secretary-General's comment that drug trafficking has surpassed in value the international trade in oil and is second only to the arms trade.

At a time when the United Nations pursuit of peace appears to be vindicated by the tides of history, let us remind ourselves that the international arms trade continues unabated in spite of all our denunciations - for, as the saying goes, "l'argent est le nerf de la guerre". Money is also the life-blood of drug traffickers. Humanity may have survived wars and grown accustomed to regional conflicts and extravagant military budgets; it may have been reluctant or unable to challenge the military-industrical complex; but today it cannot afford to be complacent about the narco-financial complex. Drug trafficking has become a dominant world industry. Mankind will not be given a second chance if the transnational corporations of death are allowed to disregard national boundaries and penetrate every continent and destroy the fabric of our societies.

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

The growing financial power of international traffickers is indeed at the core of the drug problem. Their shadowy influence is already awesome, but so far has received little attention at either the regional or the global level. A recent publication of the United Nations observed that

"Property and money transactions, especially cash transfers, related to drug trafficking have increased tremendously. The growing use of complex corporate structures and intricate business transactions involving banks, trust companies, real-estate firms and other financial institutions have increased the difficulty of subjecting to forfeiture assets obtained as a result of trafficking in drugs. Variations in bank, tax and investment legislation enable traffickers to identify loopholes in laws and to effect sufficient changes in adapting laundering schemes and techniques to hide their ill gotten profits."

The erratic ebb and flow and the sheer volume of drug money have a destabilizing effect on the supply of money and on exchange markets by creating unnatural currency surpluses. By co-operating in or simply closing their eyes to fraudulent practices, banks and financial institutions may easily become hostages caught in the web of traffickers. Priority should therefore be given to provisions of the 1988 Convention for developing mechanisms that would prevent banking systems and other financial institutions from being used to process and launder drug-related money, and would allow the revocation of confidentiality of bank records in investigation of drug trafficking.

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

The Financial Action Task Force set up by the Paris economic summit has just completed a study in which it recommends a series of 40 measures to destroy the financial circuits utilized by traffickers, including a revolutionary proposal inviting international banks to co-operate in the tracking-down of traffickers. Its conclusions should be examined very closely, especially during the forthcoming April summit in London, and later at the G-7 summit in Houston.

Intelligence-gathering and information-sharing will also play a crucial role in the years to come. In this regard we may even have some catching up to do in information-management to keep up with traffickers who are able to monitor law-enforcement action with the latest technology. Success will depend on our progress in data-fusion technology and our capacity to process raw data from a variety of sources and use it to identify potential criminal activities. The diffusion of such information is of particular importance to small countries with limited resources, which might overnight become prey to drug traffickers seeking to diversify their trade. The financial influx of narco-dollars may thus, by its novelty and magnitude, have staggering effects on a country's economy and stability.

To prevent such dangers Mauritius recently introduced in its Offshore Banking Act strict regulations against money-laundering. It also began closer co-operation with the United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs in Vienna to improve all aspects of drug control and prevention, having enacted in 1986 new legislation imposing the death penalty on drug traffickers. Since then, anti-drug programmes based on the efforts and initial experience of Mauritian volunteers have been praised for their low costs, and were used as models for two courses, in 1987 and 1989, for trainers in East Africa.

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

Human resources remain a priceless asset in the fight against drugs, but programmes for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, however ambitious, will not reduce drug trafficking on a global scale unless fundamental problems like poverty, debt and falling commodity prices are addressed. Measures for debt relief, better prices for export commodities, and market guarantees have been suggested. In considering those proposals, we should rise above political and economic differences. For the lives and livelihood of millions in drug-consuming and drug-producing regions alike depend on a mutual trade-off between diverging economic interests. So too does the survival of future generations.

Mr. AJODHIA (Suriname): It gives my delegation great pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over this important special session.

The convening of the seventeenth special session is a demonstration and a recognition of the importance the international community attaches to the drug problem. As previous speakers have said, the nature of drugs, both for individuals and for societies, has reached such destructive, indeed mortal, proportions that intensified international co-operation and joint action against the demand for, production of and trafficking in illicit drugs are unavoidable.

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

During the past decade the world trade in illicit drugs has spread at a frightening rate, and, as has been noted, may now have overtaken oil as the second largest commodity in world trade, next only to arms. There is no doubt that the drug phenomenon has now assumed such proportions that it is beyond the capacity or resources of any single country: drug addiction is no longer confined to a specific area of the world. Drug cartels easily cross the boundaries of States, for they do not recognize frontiers so long as they are able to carry out their criminal activities, thus destabilizing the economic and social structures of a growing number of countries.

In some countries, criminal syndicates thriving on drug trafficking proceeds are openly confronting the authorities and imposing conditions on them, using any means to prevail over the application of the law. As we have seen, violence, corruption, intimidation and deliberate attacks against public institutions have been common weapons of the drug barons. It goes without saying that there is a very clear link between illicit trafficking and international terrorism, subversive activities and organized crime.

According to a world survey on the extent and patterns of drug abuse, this scourge has spread to all social strata and age groups. While the majority of persons abusing drugs are male, the proportion of women abusing drugs continues to grow, and children and adolescents are often involved with drugs at a much earlier age than in past years.

At an early stage our Organization recognized the serious challenges of the drug problem, and it has played an essential role in the negotiation of relevant international agreements. In this respect I refer to the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in Vienna in 1987. That Conference

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

adopted a political Declaration and a Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline consisting of a wide-ranging set of proposals aimed at dealing with all aspects of the drug problem.

In this regard, my delegation welcomed the adoption in 1988 of the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which is an excellent example of multilateral co-operation. The Government of Suriname has already signed the Convention and steps are being taken which should lead to the ratification of the 1988 Convention.

At this point I wish to inform the Assembly that only last week our National Assembly approved the following conventions: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the Protocol amending that Convention, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the constructive and valuable work carried out by the United Nations Division on Narcotic Drugs, the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and the International Narcotics Control Board. It is the view of my delegation that the United Nations is one of the most appropriate forums in which to address the fight against drug abuse, and we therefore urge that co-ordination and co-operation with United Nations bodies such as the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Development Programme be intensified and increased.

We therefore fully support the proposal made during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly that the mandates of the United Nations anti-drugs units be reaffirmed and expanded.

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

This special session has the important task of finding a balanced approach that takes into account both sides of the drug problem, namely measures to reduce demand for illicit drugs and measures against the cultivation, production, processing and trafficking of narcotic drugs. In addition to stringent political and legal measures, educational programs should be designed to help those in society who are most vulnerable to the dangers of drugs. Therefore, we urge that comprehensive policies, programmes and strategies be devised to prevent and reduce the abuse of drugs. If the demand for drugs could be reduced, then other drug-related problems such as criminality, money laundering and the production of certain chemicals could be eliminated.

The fight against drugs cannot be fought in isolation. Effective international co-operation at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels is an effective weapon to combat the drug problem.

Although the presence of drugs in Suriname dates back to the last century, it could not in the past have been considered as a problem. Today, however, the problem has manifested itself as an acute, unwanted and tenacious scourge within Surinamese society. One of the main measures to combat the drug problem was the enaction of the Opium Act of 1955, which established as offences the cultivation of the opium poppy, the coca bush and the hennep plant. Under the Opium Act, the import, export and transit of some drugs were prohibited, along with their preparation, processing, sale, delivery, supply and transport.

Our legislation could not, however, keep pace with developments in illicit drug trafficking, in particular when Suriname became involved as a transit port for the international drug trade. The Opium Act was amended twice. In 1981 penalties were increased to a maximum sentence of 12 years and/or a fine not exceeding

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

50,000 guilders. A provision was included by which a person could be placed under a restriction order by the court and treated at the expense of the State. In 1988 the possession of marijuana seeds was also made punishable. In general it can be stated that our present legislation has a repressive nature, emphasizing the detection and punishment of offenders and the medical counselling and treatment of drug addicts.

Having emphasized some aspects of our present legislation, I have to state that the Opium Act does not provide sufficient room for law-enforcement bodies to perform their duties. In this connection I am delighted to mention the establishment of a commission early this year to revise the legislation on narcotic drugs. The terms of reference of that commission are to study and evaluate existing legislation with regard to the trade and illicit use of narcotic drugs and to make recommendations with a view to amending the statutory regulations and draft the necessary regulations.

The Government of Suriname is aware that it will take some time before our drug legislation has been adjusted to present needs and developments and brought into line with the recommendations of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

The problem of drug abuse is a cause of grave concern for the community since it not only affects public health but also entails social disruption and increased criminality. It is therefore a must that every Government take the necessary steps to halt this danger.

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

It was against that background that in 1986 our Government established the National Council on Drug Control, with the task of controlling and preventing the illicit use of drugs in every possible way. The Council has drafted an ambitious plan to tackle the drug problem in all its aspects, but, owing to financial constraints, it is obliged to limit its activities. Because of these financial constraints it is not yet possible to pay adequate attention to rehabilitation.

As a consequence of the increase in drug-related crime in Suriname, a Narcotics Division was established within the Police Corps of Suriname. Although this Division is carrying out its duties in a properly organized manner, we have to take into consideration the different restraints it encounters in executing its functions. In particular we may mention the fact that it is not properly equipped to function adequately.

Suriname attaches utmost importance to a proper functioning of the Narcotics Division, and all efforts will therefore be made to strengthen that Division through training and expansion of personnel in charge of drug control, the introduction of undercover operations, since that is an integral part of any drug-enforcement unit, the purchase of professional equipment to control drug-related crimes and the exchange, on a regular basis, of information with the countries of the Caribbean and South America and with the United States of America, Canada and other friendly nations.

In this regard we may, if needed, request financial and technical assistance from relevant United Nations bodies for the purpose of improving our infrastructure in the fight against illicit trafficking.

The Government of Suriname is steadily working on the national front towards the fulfilment of the policy set forth in our President's statement on the subject. He said:

(Mr. Ajodhia, Suriname)

"The increasing criminality, particularly the youth and drug-related criminality, is of grave concern to the Administration. The policy of the Government is thus aimed at the total eradication of the illicit traffic in drugs and the battle with drug abuse.

"More than before, the investigation and prosecution policy will be directed to an effective suppression of those crimes.

"The Administration will make the preparations for that purpose and is considering additional legislation which will make the battle against and the prevention of those crimes more effective."

My Government reiterates its commitment to do everything possible to curb the drug problem, both on the regional and on the international levels.

There is already close co-operation with neighbouring countries, and agreements have been signed with Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela. Negotiations are taking place with other friendly nations to conclude bilateral agreements for the prevention, curbing and eradication of the illegal production, consumption and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

We cherish the hope that the goals and objectives of the special session can be achieved and that the action programme and political declaration will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. STANISLAUS (Grenada): My delegation is delighted to see in the Chair at this seventeenth special session of the General Assembly the distinguished son of Nigeria who presided with amazing diplomatic skill and facility over the forty-fourth session of the Assembly. We extend hearty congratulations and best wishes to Major-General Garba, now a minister in Nigeria's presidential Cabinet.

Please allow me the liberty to refer to this most important convening of the United Nations General Assembly as a "special" special session, called at a high

(Mr. Stanislaus, Grenada)

political level to consider as a matter of urgency the question of international co-operation against the illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Of the special sessions convened thus far since the founding of the United Nations, this one, the seventeenth, deals with the most dangerous situation facing society and the international community, more dangerous today than nuclear confrontation, a situation that is gnawing away at the very fabric of family and society with deleterious and devastating consequences globally. The evil has spread subtly, in geometric progression as it were, until today it has become a global problem calling for a global response. That is what makes this special session so special. It is frightening to contemplate the speed with which this evil is becoming a culture, a way of life in civilized society.

The underlying cause for the rapid growth of the monster of the drug culture is to be found in the inordinate profits derived from that nefarious trade.

In his 1989 report on the work of the Organization the Secretary-General stated that:

> "estimates suggest that the monetary value of drug trafficking has recently surpassed that of international trade in oil and is second only to the arms trade." (A/44/1, p. 23)

Fortune magazine places a trade tag of $500 billion a year on this illicit business.

For any trade or business to be profitable, the law of supply and demand propounded by Adam Smith applies. The evil of slavery flourished because of supply and demand, and that gave rise to trafficking and distribution in human misery. The drug trade, which thrives equally on human misery, is supported essentially by the two main pillars of supply and demand. Trafficking in drugs is modern-day slavery, and here we are faced with the "chicken-egg" syndrome, the perennial

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polemics as to which comes first, which is more important to control: supply or demand? In between, however, we have to tackle the trafficking and distribution coefficients. It would seem, therefore, that this consuming evil demands a many-pronged approach, rhetoric notwithstanding.

In the pursuit of whatever global strategy appears right and reasonable, the international community should bear in mind that as we travel the uncharted waters of the drug culture we either swim together or witness our societies go down, one by one.

It is thus imperative that, after our deliberations here will have ended, a comprehensive and workable political declaration and a programme of action evolve to which all Members of the international community can subscribe with comfort and confidence.

In the fight against drugs an inventory must be taken of what the international community's arsenal contains, in addition to goodwill.

(Mr. Stanislaus, Grenada)

In this connection, international goodwill received a shot in the arm when, on 29 September last, President Barco of Colombia addressed the United Nations General Assembly. In a substantive, eloquent and passionate statement, he reaffirmed the global danger of the drug culture and appealed for a special session - this special session. On 1 November 1989 the General Assembly, by resolution 44/16, approved, and set down terms of reference for, a special session, out of which should come for adoption a political declaration and a global programme of action. The anti-drug declaration signed last week in Cartagena by the Presidents of Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and the United States of America should further enhance this goodwill.

To effectuate the global programme of action that the General Assembly, at this special session, is mandated to produce, the United Nations must have in place the necessary legal instruments or tools, and these must be subscribed to and ratified by national legislatures and other competent bodies. A major legal tool with which to fight the scourge of global trafficking in drugs is the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which was adopted in Vienna on 19 September 1988. As of 15 January 1990 the Convention had been signed by 89 States and ratified by four. To enter into force, it must be ratified by 24 States. The Convention provides, among other things, for the extradition of drug traffickers, the tracing and freezing of assets derived from the illicit drug trade, and the elimination of bank secrecy in drug investigations - a tool against laundering. To put teeth - metaphorically speaking - into the Convention, two things are necessary: first, its entry into force, with the necessary 24 ratifications; secondly, the streamlining of countries' domestic laws to correspond with the provisions of the Convention - and several countries have already done so.

(Mr. Stanislaus, Grenada)

Other tools in the United Nations arsenal in the fight against illicit trafficking in drugs are bodies such as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, whose recommendations are an integral part of this special session aimed at enhancing the role of the United Nations in the fight against illicit drugs; the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), whose efforts are concentrated on help for developing countries faced with the illicit cultivation, trafficking or abuse of narcotic drugs, with the focus on all aspects of the drug problem, including crop substitution, rural development, law enforcement, public education, legislative and institutional reform - a veritable master plan; the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which is the main policy body of the United Nations system in matters of international drug control; the Division of Narcotic Drugs, which serves as the secretariat and executive arm of the Commission; and the International Narcotics Control Board, whose function is to limit cultivation, production and manufacture, so that the quantity available is just adequate for medical and scientific purposes. Working closely with the Commission are specialized agencies and bodies, such as the World Health Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the International Labour Organisation.

My delegation respectfully submits that there is hardly any need for new instruments, such as treaties, protocols or conventions, or for new United Nations international-control bodies, to wage the war against drugs. Streamlining what already exists, by making structural changes - integration, co-ordination and consolidation - could increase the effectiveness of the role of the United Nations in the fight against this social evil. Very often, what is needed is not new things but the will to make old things work.

Having touched upon the broad outline of the matter under consideration, my delegation would like to refer to the drug situation in the Commonwealth Caribbean

(Mr. Stanislaus, Grenada)

subregion. This is hardly an area of excessive drug supply or demand. However, because of their geographical location and the wide spread of the islands, many of them are used by traffickers as transit and trans-shipment points. This, together with the fact that the islands are stunning tourist attractions, creates an opportunity for visitors to bring in and use illicit drugs. Unsuspecting members of the population are tempted to try this new-found elixir. This creates the vice of drug abuse, which is a matter of social, moral, economic and public-health concern.

Our leaders are keenly aware of the problem, so drug abuse is placed high on the agenda at CARICOM ministerial meetings. At the meeting, in my country, last July of Commonwealth Caribbean Heads, the declaration of Grand Anse was adopted. This contained two proposals which it is hoped will be adopted by the international community. The first, which was put forward by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, is that an international criminal court, with jurisdiction in respect of certain categories of offences, should be established. The second, which was put forward by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, consists of broad initiatives, with respect to investigation and interdiction, to control drug trafficking through the subregion, which is being used as a trans-shipment centre.

The problem of drugs in Grenada is a small part of the global picture. Nevertheless, it is of sufficient concern to my Government to warrant putting early deterrent measures into place. Traditional institutions, such as home, school, church - the first line of defence in combating this social evil, particularly among young people - are sensitized to the danger through public education campaigns to discourage experimentation with drugs. Books, videos, films and pamphlets are widely distributed. Community-level training and Government bodies, such as police and customs and public-health authorities, are necessary aids in the

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fight. In addition, the powers of the court and the rehabilitation of offenders play a significant role in the struggle.

The illicit cultivation of drugs cannot, and should not, be condoned. Nevertheless, the socio-economic dimension of the problem involves poor farmers who grow the coca leaves, the opium poppy and the marijuana plant to eke out a bare existence. These farmers are pawns in this dirty game. They are not the manufacturers, the distributors, the traffickers in the trade. Their share of the booty from the loathsome enterprise is negligible. The link in the chain can be broken by crop substitution, and that is an area in which the United Nations can play a healthy role.

At this special session the international community has analysed the drug-abuse phenomenon. Let us now synthesize our thinking to do battle with this social malaise in all its forms and manifestations, at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. It is a war that can be won and should be fought. However, if this is to be accomplished, there must be the necessary political will and a commensurate level of financing by all Member States, according to their ability to pay.

It is the hope of my delegation that the political declaration and the global programme of action to be adopted at the end of this special session will reflect adequately the urgency of the situation. Otherwise the cancer of drug abuse will continue to eat into the decade of the 1990s, and history will record that, given the opportunity to help mankind to overcome a serious social and physical affliction, we were simply givers of the word, not doers of the word.

The international community should be motivated to action locked as it is in a deadly fight against the unholy trinity of drugs, arms and terrorism - the last two being spin-offs from the first. We implore nations of goodwill to bring a non-political dimension to this universal effort.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker will be the representative of Albania. Immediately after his statement we shall take up the report of the Credentials Committee and thereafter continue with the general debate.

I should like to say how grateful we are to representatives for their kind co-operation. Statements are getting shorter and, I believe, more objective.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): First of all, Sir, allow me on behalf of the Albanian delegation to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at this special session and on your very successful guidance of our business.

It has become evident by now that the production, consumption and trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances have turned into a social plague and an acute economic and political problem afflicting both developed and developing countries. Drug trafficking, in particular, is an activity associated openly with international terrorism, and the evermore increasing dimensions it is assuming have now become of legitimate concern to the entire international community. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, pointed out in his annual report submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session:

> "Although efforts to combat this scourge have intensified in recent years, estimates suggest that the monetary value of drug trafficking has recently surpassed that of international trade in oil and is second only to the arms trade ...". (A/44/1, p. 23)

Moreover, the extensive use and consumption of drugs, coupled with the drug trade and trafficking, inflict not only degeneration and physical and moral damage on the people, the younger generation primarily but also result in catastrophic increases in crime as well as in other grave economic and social consequences. The problem is attaining ever-increasing proportions endangering the very political and economic stability of certain States. This situation has justifiably heightened world-wide concern and not only brought to the surface the indispensability of intensifying the struggle against these negative phenomena on a national level but also of co-ordinating efforts and strengthening co-operation on a regional and international basis. Proof of this growing concern is the unanimous decision of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session to convene this special session

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

devoted to international co-operation against the illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania shares the concern over the alarming problems created by the use of and traffic in drugs in most of the countries in the world, and welcomes the sincere efforts of the international community to join forces and co-ordinate actions in the fight against this social scourge in full compliance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Our country, despite the fact that drugs and other illicit substances are not used and traffic in such substances has never been allowed in its territory, is party to several international Conventions on drugs and has condemned and continues to condemn the illicit trafficking of these substances as an activity that criminally undermines human life and dignity and endangers even the economic, social and political stability of various countries.

Prompted by the sincere desire to make its contribution to the struggle against drug trafficking, and aware of the dangers such trafficking could bring about for the peoples of the Balkans, Albania has consistently considered as useful the regional co-operation of the Balkan countries in the war against drugs. It has participated in a series of conferences, Balkan or European, held on these issues.

While we support the legitimate efforts of the international community and the co-ordinating activity of the United Nations and its bodies in the struggle against these phenomena, we stand against every act which, under the pretext of the fight against production and trafficking of drugs, is in fact aimed against the freedom and independence of peoples, against their democratic rights and aspirations. The Albanian delegation therefore upholds the view that under no circumstances at all should the drug war be allowed to be used for the purpose of attaining certain political goals or for interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, thus

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infringing on their sovereignty and territorial integrity, much less should it be allowed to be used to justify moves of a military nature or acts of aggression.

We are of the opinion that the roots of the phenomena of the production, consumption and trafficking of drugs and their grave consequences in the economic, social and political life of the countries afflicted by them lie primarily in the very nature of the social and political system. It is known that drug consumption in different countries involves the various strata of the population, from the upper classes down to the poorest ones. If there is a "fashionable" use of drugs among the former, the latter seeks "consolation" in drugs. Even so, it would not be right for the expenses of the war against drugs to be paid by the weak.

In Albania the policy of social and economic development, which has ensured social equality for everyone to live with dignity on his honest work, the concern of the entire society for a life with humane motives and ideas, supported by necessary judicial and administrative measures, has barred the way to the incidence and spreading of the phenomenon of the use and trafficking of drugs.

Albanian society has dedicated special care to the education of the younger generation, to which all roads have been opened up and all possibilities have been created for all-round cultural, physical and spiritual development. Of primordial importance has been the continuous preventive education, which aims at alerting all strata of the population to the damages caused by drugs so that the whole society and the family, too, oppose drugs and stand against them like a strong barrier.

Drug addiction is not now and has never before been an issue of concern to us. We have preserved and will continue to preserve this sound tradition so that this social plague does not hit our country. To this end there is total commitment of our State and our entire society. The Albanian State bans through legal

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provisions the cultivation of narcotic plants and does not allow drugs to be trans-shipped to other countries through its territory. Our laws provide severe punishment for those who might produce, distribute or use drugs. Thus, although there is no drug problem in our country, in view of the proportions that the drug problem, especially drug trafficking, has assumed in the world, special importance is attached to strict observance of the relevant legislation, including equally severe measures and regulations designed to bar the way to the production, use and traffic of drugs.

Up to now, in Albania there has been no occurrence of problems relating to the abusive use of medications falling under the category of drugs. Special legal provisions regulate their circulation, preventing their illicit use, possession and sale. On the other hand, continuous care is shown so that the media, health institutions and educational and cultural bodies educate and inform the population, especially the younger generation, by constantly pointing out the dangers posed by the use of drugs to the human body and personality and to the whole of society. Aside from the above-mentioned measures, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania has adopted a series of other technical and organizational rules to assist in close scrutiny at likely crossing points in order to prevent the penetration and traffic of psychotropic substances through Albanian territory to other countries.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

In conclusion, the Albanian delegation wishes to reiterate that it fully comprehends the long-held preoccupation expressed by the international community and our Organization over the drugs phenomenon and the illicit traffic in drugs - that horrendous business second only to the arms trade. In its view, this special session should, among other things, name the real causes of the drug phenomenon, of the growth of its traffic and consumption. By identifying the real causes of the problem and its consequences and by adopting the most effective measures to combat it, we can only hope that the road to a solution will be found and that mankind will be saved from this serious threat and the consequences that its future development would entail.

AGENDA ITEM 3 (continued)

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SEVENTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

(b) REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (A/S-17/10)

The PRESIDENT: I invite members to turn their attention to the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 21 of its report (A/S-17/10).

I shall now call on those delegations wishing to speak in explanation of vote before the voting on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. AL-ALFI (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): As Chairman of the Group of Arab States for February 1990, and on behalf of the following member countries - Algeria, Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and the Yemen Arab Republic - and on behalf of Palestine, I should like to put on record our objections to the credentials of the delegation of Israel to the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, I should like to raise the political and legal considerations concerning our objections to the credentials of the delegation of Israel. Israel has been a Member of the United Nations for more than four decades, during which time Israel has proven that it is not a peace-loving country, in contravention of the provisions of the Charter, particularly Article 4, which calls for acceptance of the obligations contained in the Charter, which Israel has not carried out. It has also completely disregarded General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Here I should like to refer to General Assembly resolution ES-9/1 of 5 February 1982, which declares that Israel's record and actions confirm that it is not a peace-loving Member State and that it has not carried out its obligations under the Charter.

Hence, we should like to put on record our reservations on the credentials of the delegation of Israel to the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly. Our objections are based on the following:

First, Israel has not implemented Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine, on the situation in the Middle East, on Lebanon, and on other relevant issues, thereby contravening Article 25 of the Charter.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

Second, Israel has not implemented General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, which call for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return, the right to self-determination, and the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on the land of Palestine. Those resolutions also call for an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the non-acquisition of land by force and the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Arab Golan Heights.

Third, Israel has not implemented General Assembly resolutions on other questions relevant to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

Fourth, Israel has violated the human rights of the Palestinian people in all occupied Arab territories and in Jerusalem. I refer in particular to its violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 19 August 1947 and the escalating Israeli oppression of the Arab and Palestinian population in the occupied territories, including the forced repatriation of the Arab population from those territories since the beginning of the intifadah against the Israeli occupation.

Fifth, Israel has continued its annexation of occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Arab Golan Heights, thereby violating the Charter of the United Nations and rules and norms of international law.

Sixth, Israel continues to wage aggression against Arab countries.

Seventh, Israel continues to co-operate with the racist régime of South Africa, particularly in the nuclear and economic fields.

(Mr. Al-Alfi, Democratic Yemen)

Eighth, the credentials of the delegation of Israel have been issued from the occupied city of Jerusalem, which is a violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), and other relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly resolution 35/169 E of 15 December 1980.

Mr. QURESHI (Pakistan): In pursuit of the decision taken by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the realities of the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan continues to adhere to its policy of withholding recognition of the régime in Kabul, which does not enjoy the support of the Afghanistan people.

In regard to the report of the Credentials Committee contained in document A/S-17/10 of 21 February 1990, which is before the General Assembly, my delegation wishes to put on record its formal reservation to the credentials of the delegation representing Afghanistan at the seventeenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. ZAMORA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation wishes to put on record that the Government of the Republic of Cuba does not recognize the so-called Government of the Republic of Panama nor its representative. These were chosen by the invading troops of the United States of America, which imposed a satellite Government. The Panamanian people was unable to exercise its right to a free choice, without foreign interference. Thus, the credentials of the representative of Panama are not legitimate, nor do they represent the interests of the Panamanian people. We therefore wish clearly to put on record our reservations in this respect.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee contained in paragraph 21 of its report (A/S-17/10). In the Credentials Committee the draft resolution was adopted without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to proceed in the same manner?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution S-7/1).

The PRESIDENT: The representative of Afghanistan has asked to make a statement in exercise of the right of reply, and I now call upon him.

Mr. MOHAMMADI (Afghanistan): My delegation categorically rejects all of the allegations of the representative of Pakistan. We believe Pakistan's unreal attitude towards the Republic of Afghanistan - which is not a new one - to be groundless.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded the consideration of agenda item 3.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. PAOLILLO (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): This special session of the General Assembly is testing the international community's capacity to come together to take effective action to put an end to drug-related illicit activities. We cannot afford to fail this crucial test.

It is an extremely difficult task for several reasons. First, we are facing a formidable, powerful and ubiquitous enemy, one that seduces, corrupts, enslaves and kills, swallowing up vast economic resources in the process. Secondly, drug trafficking is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon because of its origins, its manifestations and its consequences. It spreads easily and it is difficult, if not impossible, to fight it in isolation or without co-ordination.*

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* Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Paolillo, Uruguay)

Thirdly, drug trafficking affects States in different ways, just as the nature and amount of resources available to combat it differ. Hence the priorities and capabilities of each country differ, something which adds to the existing difficulties in arriving at global and homogeneous co-operation.

Lastly, our task is compounded by the fact that, while we must continue to wage the war against drug trafficking, we must also safeguard the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention, on which international coexistence is based, and maintain certain vital objectives - the economic well-being of our peoples and the stability of the democratic system.

Our future decisions on the manner in which the plan of action we will adopt at the special session will be implemented must take all those factors into account.

In the first instance, international co-operation must be global in its objectives. The war against drug trafficking will not be won unless it attacks all of the causes and manifestations at once. We cannot reasonably expect producer countries to root out the illicit production of drugs if consumer countries do not at the same time attempt to reduce or eliminate consumption, if illicit transit is not halted and if the use of precursor chemical products is not controlled. Fortunately, the principle of shared responsibility has made strides and is universally recognized today, and we can therefore avoid the pitfall of inconclusive, Manichean debates. The recent Cartagena Declaration is a historic example of that constructive and pragmatic spirit.

Secondly, international co-operation must be global in scope. It must be an element in the efforts taken by all States, since all States are real or potential victims of the harmful effects of the illicit production and consumption of drugs. The pervasive magnitude of the scourge demands a universal response. The fact that

(Mr. Paolillo, Uruguay)

159 countries have gathered here to pool their efforts towards a common goal is a reaffirmation of the need to find universally agreed solutions to a problem that concerns us all.

Thirdly, our future actions must be based on a just sharing of responsibilities and tasks, which must follow the pattern in which drug trafficking has affected each country and match the resources available in each. The plan of action must be implemented in such a way that it does not impose upon States tasks or responsibilities that exceed their capabilities and so that it does not create imbalances among them that would make the victory over drug trafficking unattainable.

We must not overlook the close relationship that exists between the problems of underdevelopment and the spread of the production of illicit drugs. Thousands of people in developing countries are taking the profitable drug-trafficking route, forced by poverty, unemployment and the lack of alternative forms of subsistence. If we are to attack drug trafficking at its roots, we must therefore assist developing countries to overcome their economic problems.

In this connection, developed countries should play a special role. Not only are they better placed to contribute the financial and technological resources needed in the fight against the illicit traffic in and production of drugs; they can also adopt such measures as, for example, making their markets accessible to the products of developing countries, thereby allowing for crop substitution and the revitalization of the latters' economies. This special responsibility of the developed countries is doubly justified by the fact that it is, after all, in the large urban centres of the industrialized world that most of the demand for drugs is generated, forging the first link in the chain of that perverse industry.

(Mr. Paolillo, Uruguay)

We must not be discouraged by the magnitude of the task before us. We are not starting from square one. The international community already has precise knowledge of the dangers inherent in the problem's many and insidious manifestations and of its social, economic and political consequences. We know the means we must employ and the resources we require. Furthermore, we have institutional mechanisms that have already been proved effective - the competent bodies of the United Nations with headquarters at Vienna, which have yielded maximum benefits within the limits of their budgetary constraints.

In addition, there are several international treaties that provide a legal framework that, while incomplete, creates an appropriate point of departure for future efforts. Lastly, and most importantly, we have the firm resolve of States to destroy the scourge which is undermining the health of their peoples and the stability of their institutions. That resolve, admirably expressed in many acts of personal and collective courage - such as those taken by the authorities and the people of Colombia - enables us to have confidence that victory is not too far away.

Fortunately, Uruguay has not been subjected to the harsh trials from which Colombia and other fraternal countries have suffered. In Uruguay there is no illicit drug production, but incipient consumption and traffic do exist, and the trend is upward. In addition, we are forced to assume that, given the difficulties they are experiencing in the traditional trafficking channels, dealers could shift their operations to our country's territory. Uruguay therefore attaches great importance to the problem and has adopted a number of measures to deal with it.

Since the creation in 1988 of the National Board on Prevention and Punishment of Illicit Drug Traffic and Drug Abuse the fight against drugs in our country has been taking place in a planned and co-ordinated manner. The National Board, which is an interministerial body at the highest level, has been entrusted with the task

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of formulating policy in the matter and of assessing and monitoring its implementation. The Board has prepared studies and reports; it has promoted international, regional and subregional co-operation; and it has adopted many measures in the areas of security, preventive education, assistance and rehabilitation and international co-operation, all to be implemented by the appropriate bodies.

(Mr. Paolillo, Uruguay)

With regard to drug-related financial flows, Uruguay knows that, because of the nature of its banking system that system can be used by drug traffickers to launder money obtained through their illicit operations. The Uruguayan banking system is based on the principle of secrecy, which protects operations, but that principle is not absolute. Current legislation provides that in certain circumstances the judiciary can have access to banking information under a court order. That procedure can be used to carry out judicial investigations on the laundering of dollars, when based on well-founded accusations. In that way, we balance the need to retain the essence of our banking system - which is a basic factor in our economy - and the need to enable the judiciary to do its job and prevent the system from being used for criminal ends. Additional measures to improve the legal system in this area are now being considered.

We are certain that thanks to the expert leadership of Ambassador Garba and the valuable contribution of Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner, as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, to our work, this session will be successful and will in the future be viewed as the start of the final chapter in the history of our fight against the drug trade.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): I am pleased that Ambassador Garba is presiding over the work of this important special session. We are impressed by the wisdom and skill with which he has been guiding the work of the forty-fourth session, which has already made great historic achievements; this makes us hopeful that the special session too will achieve success. I congratulate him.

The convening of this special session is a clear reflection of the feelings of the international community and its great concern about the problem of the production and trafficking of drugs and drug addiction, and about the growth of that problem internationally and nationally.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

Thus it has begun to pose a threat not only to the structure and continued existence of society but to international peace and security, for the gangs of drug traffickers have become a powerful armed force that is able to undermine the security of States and destabilize international relations. For that reason the international community must promote the fight against this pernicious phenomenon with a view to eradicating it. That goal cannot be attained without effective measures at the national and international levels.

The responsibility to eradicate the problem is a common responsibility of all States. The United Nations should play a central role in leading and co-ordinating efforts in this sphere, for it is the proper international forum to pool the efforts of all States in combating the problem while safeguarding the sovereignty and independence of all States.

The fight against illicit narcotics must be both national and international. On the national level, all States - producer, consumer and transit States alike - should adopt strict measures to combat the production, transit and consumption of drugs on their soil.

In Syria, the competent authorities take active steps to prevent drugs from being smuggled into our country. They also work constantly to formulate deterrent and preventive measures and to bolster Syria's drug-control machinery, stationing units along our borders. Police dogs are used to prevent drugs from being smuggled into Syria. Those intensive measures resulted in the following drug seizures in 1989: a one-ton shipment of hashish was seized and the smugglers arrested; 684 kilogrammes of hashish was seized and the smugglers arrested; 18.105 kilogrammes of heroin was seized and the smugglers arrested; 463 grammes of cocaine was seized and the offenders arrested; 361,773 tablets of Keptagon were

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

seized and the offenders arrested; thanks to co-operation with Arab and other countries, more than six tons of hashish were seized and the smugglers arrested.

Under a Prime Ministerial Decree, a national committee has been established to combat the use of drugs and psychotropic substances. The committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Justice, Health, the Interior, Labour and Public Organizations, and it is chaired by the Minister of the Interior. In a series of meetings, the committee adopted several recommendations on public health and education, which are being implemented. They call for stress on the educational, health and criminal aspects of the drug problem.

In 1960 a Presidential Decree was issued, and was adopted as Law No. 182 (1960); it is still in force, and relates to the fight against drugs and the regulation of the use of and traffic in drugs. The law provides for sentences of hard labour for life and heavy fines for those who export, import, produce or manufacture any illicit narcotic drug. It also provides for hard labour for life or a shorter period and substantial fines for those who acquire, possess, purchase, sell, deliver, transfer or offer for use narcotics, and for those who trade in narcotics, with exceptions set out in the law.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

In addition, similar penalties are fixed for anyone who cultivates crops that might at any stage be used for the production of drugs for trade in any form contrary to the provisions of the law. That same law also provides the death penalty for anyone who deliberately kills any drug law-enforcement agent in the performance of his duty.

The role of the United Nations on the international level is one of co-ordinating international and national efforts against drugs within the context of global endeavours to eradicate the drug scourge. Syria has consistently worked to enhance international efforts through its participation in international conferences and seminars of experts in the field dealing with fighting drugs. Syria has also concluded bilateral agreements and has acceded to several regional and international instruments. We also work closely with competent bodies engaged in the fight against drugs in Arab and foreign countries. We exchange data to assist the international anti-drug campaign to put an end to this serious threat. Syria has actively participated with fraternal Arab countries in developing a standard Arab law against drugs and in drawing up the Arab strategy against the illicit use of drugs and psychotropic substances that was adopted by Arab Ministers of the Interior in 1986.

All peoples of the world now look to this special session of the General Assembly with great expectations and in the high hope that it will make a significant contribution to saving present and future generations from the evils of illicit drugs, with their devastating consequences for all communities and for the civilization of all of mankind.

Mr. HILL-ARGUELLO (El Salvador) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Government of El Salvador, and on my own behalf, I should like to congratulate the President on his unanimous election to guide the General Assembly

(Mr. Hill-Arquello, El Salvador)

at its seventeenth special session. We trust that under his guidance we will achieve our objectives in the fight against drugs.

We should also like to reiterate our support for the important initiative introduced by the President of Colombia at the General Assembly's forty-fourth session to hold this important special session. We extend our thanks to the Secretary-General who, in consultation with the relevant United Nations bodies, has proposed a plan of action to facilitate and promote the adoption of decisions to implement measures and actions in the war against drugs.

At this time, as we near the end of our deliberations, we can say that everything that can be said on the subject has been said. Preceding speakers have addressed the question with eloquence, pragmatism and realism and have made proposals containing recommendations and measures of unquestionable value that warrant our support. However, since the subject of drugs is a complex and serious one, one that knows no frontiers and that affects us all in different ways and to varying degrees, it is only logical that each country should want to express its own particular views on the matter and to make its own contribution, with conviction and enthusiasm, to the search for ways to alleviate it and eventually eradicate it.

So serious have the production, supply, demand, trafficking in and illicit distribution of drugs and psychotropic substances become that they now constitute a threat to national societies owing to their negative effects on our institutions, on the political and economic stability of States and on the unity of the family, particularly with regard to children and young people. That is demonstrated by the interest of a great many of the Members of the Organization taking part in the special session in an effort to strengthen international co-operation and to adopt and implement practical measures to combat the common enemy, one that is further

(Mr. Hill-Arquello, El Salvador)

aggravating the already difficult economic, social and humanitarian problems that exist, particularly in developing countries. The tragic and deplorable events in Colombia are an example of the dangers of this persistent evil - and we must at the same time express our admiration to that Government for its firm and resolute struggle against drug trafficking.

The drug problem cannot be viewed in isolation from the internal problems of countries nor solely from the standpoint of producers and consumers; it must be viewed in a broader and more comprehensive perspective, both national and international, one that includes social, economic, cultural and political factors and takes into account the moral values and precepts that govern mankind.

My Government considers that, notwithstanding the fact that every State is responsible for adopting and implementing machinery and measures to combat drugs, there is universal recognition that, on the one hand, the size, nature and scope of the problem transcend the individual capacities of many countries, especially poorer countries with limited economic, technological and financial resources, and, on the other hand, that there is a need to act in concert and in close co-operation among all the members of the international community.

We understand the high priority of the struggle against the production of and illicit trafficking in drugs in the major producer and consumer countries, but there is also a need for appropriate attention to be paid, in countries where the problem has not yet assumed alarming proportions, to avoiding a deterioration in the situation, which could have repercussions on fragile international stability.

In that connection we believe that as the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances enters into force we will find ourselves in possession of an effective universal instrument that will contribute to alleviating the pressures and threats that confront States

(Mr. Hill-Arguello, El Salvador)

today through its deterrent and corrective provisions designed to rein in those who are profiting from the trade in illicit drugs.

The advances in international co-operation in the struggle against this scourge of mankind are encouraging, and the special session affords us a historic opportunity to strengthen and consolidate our joint efforts to achieve a better and more effective co-operation, which, as many speakers have noted, is necessary if we are to work within the legal framework of international co-operation to erase frontiers in dealing with our common enemy. That would be a manifestation of the political will, responsibility and determination of our Governments and of every single one of our citizens to do all in their power to find a solution to the serious problems we are facing and to facilitate the path towards a higher standard of living for our peoples.

(Mr. Hill-Arguello, El Salvador)

Nor is El Salvador entirely free from that threat. But we are still in time - through determined joint effort by Government, the nation's private institutions, and the community, and with international help - to minimize and eventually eliminate the ill effects of drugs.

As a country of Central America, El Salvador is exposed to high risks with respect to production, consumption and traffic of drugs. Central America has been a transit and supply point for the United States and for local markets which have an obvious place in the chain of demand. Large seizures of cocaine in the western part of the country and in our capital show that the drug trade has found a route through our country and prove the existence of an internal supply-and-demand market which must be fought. Marijuana production has been repeatedly documented, and consumption has increased alarmingly, particularly among students under 20 years of age.

In the last decade, the problem of drug addiction in El Salvador took on a new dimension, because armed conflict has caused war trauma among various social groups, particularly youth, creating frustration and a crisis of social values and principles. That situation destroys family unity, the very basis of our society. Considering also the economic and social problems that affect the majority of the population, it is clear that conditions are ripe for increased drug abuse and its potential threat to a country which is making a tremendous effort to consolidate democracy and social justice.

It would thus be unfair if, after more than 10 years of armed violence, we were to fall into the grip of organizations carrying out illicit drug-related activities, which could easily destroy a nation the majority of whose people live on the very brink of survival because, inter alia, of the irrational destruction by terrorist action of the economic infrastructure and sources of production.

(Mr. Hill-Arquello, El Salvador)

To prevent the situation from getting out of control, my Government shares the view that in countries like El Salvador, where the problem of drugs has not taken on alarming proportions, we must take measures of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation and adopt legal measures such as the creation of an appropriate institutional structure to enable Governments to act effectively and firmly against drug-related criminal activities.

Consistent with that and keenly aware of the social, economic and political dangers stemming from the drug problem, we in El Salvador have initiated co-ordination between Government and private industry to formulate and carry out an anti-drug programme.

While there are limits to our financial and technical resources, both human and material, we have begun pilot projects in our capital city's metropolitan area. They include schools, colleges, the labour sector of industry and areas of scarce resources. In addition, with the help of experts, we have formulated and begun a national anti-drug project, which I hope will be supported by friendly interested Governments and the relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, the Inter-American Commission against Drug Abuse, the International Development Association and the Inter-American Development Bank. We hope thus to develop our potential and modernize our system so we can take more effective action against drugs at the national and international levels.

We are, inter alia, drawing up a set of laws to punish producers, sellers and consumers of drugs, along with other provisions to gain effective control over other psychoactive substances. To co-ordinate those activities we have established a National Anti-Drug Council, chaired by the Minister of Finance and including the Ministers of Defence, Justice, the Interior, Education and Public Health.

(Mr. Hill-Arguello, El Salvador)

Among these joint efforts, the Anti-Drug Foundation of El Salvador deserves special mention. This is a private, non-political, not-for-profit organization which now guides our comprehensive complementary programmes for the prevention of drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of users among the Salvadorian population. Those programmes are co-ordinated with the ministries that are members of the National Anti-Drug Council. The Council, with financial assistance from Salvadorian private bodies, participates also in the plan for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of users, in the creation of a resource and documentation centre and in mass campaigns, aimed particularly at heads of families, which are the basis for the creation of a drug-free home environment.

Solving the drug problem is the shared responsibility of all members of the international community and it is therefore imperative that we broaden and consolidate international co-operation to confront the highly sophisticated machinery of the illicit drug activities. We believe that, along with the struggle being waged in countries where the consequences of drugs have, unfortunately, been disastrous, we must take preventive measures to avoid an even greater crisis in countries where the effects of drugs have not yet reached alarming proportions.

Moreover, we hope that the recommendations of the seventeenth special session will not remain declarations of principle, but will constitute a genuine commitment by States to shoulder our true responsibilities in realizing those principles, and that this commitment will be included in the plan of action which has been considered with such great dedication and interest both in the Preparatory Committee and, later, in the Ad Hoc Committee.

If we want to win, we cannot continue to be spectators in the fight against drugs. We representatives of the community of nations must work hard and united

(Mr. Hill-Arquello, El Salvador)

for the good of our peoples and, with focused and determined effort, to eradicate one of the harshest scourges ever to afflict mankind, thus enabling us to leave a better world to future generations.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded the general debate, which included consideration of agenda items 9 to 13.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.